

AMERICA AND AFRICA.

---

THE ANNUAL DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE

SEVENTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY,

IN

WASHINGTON, D. C.,

JANUARY 15, 1888,

BY

Rev. J. ASPINWALL HODGE, D. D.,

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT.

---

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

---

WASHINGTON CITY,

COLONIZATION BUILDING, 450 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE.

1888.

*Afr 7368.88*



Harvard College Library

FROM

*The American  
Colonization Society.*

*7 March, 1888.*



*Am. C. ...*

## DISCOURSE.

Psalms 67: 4.

“O let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for Thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.”

The sovereignty of God is the only source of confidence and praise. Fate, chance, the action and reaction of the forces of nature, the confused struggle of men to accomplish each his own purpose and the presence and influence of spiritual principalities and powers, the more they are considered, increase anxiety and despair. “The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be, glad thereof.” He rules and overrules: nothing can occur amiss; all things shall accomplish His gracious purposes.

God’s sovereignty is recognized in the accomplishment of salvation. The opposition of the devil is in vain. “Against the holy child Jesus, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together,” but could do only “whatsoever His hand and His counsel determined before to be done.” He, as the Lord over all, defends His church, and leads her to certain victory and universality, notwithstanding all possible combinations for her persecution and annihilation. In His daily providence, “He thinks upon” each, even “the poor and needy.” “He causeth all things to work together for good to them that love God.” He numbers their hairs, will not permit their feet to slide, answers their prayers, and enriches them with all temporal and spiritual good. “No one is able to pluck them out of His hand.” All this is taught in the text, and calls forth songs of praise and confidence even in the darkest hour. Yet special reference is here made to God’s sovereignty over nations. In other passages, He is said to determine their rise, peculiar characteristics, bounds and powers, for the sake of His church, for her development, training, enlightenment, reproof, chastening, and final increase, until she shall include and bless all nations. All are embraced in the covenant with Abraham, and shall compose that innumerable multitude which shall praise Christ, as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Our text, however, like many in the Psalms, presents, not the God of Providence, but the Sovereign Ruler, who shall govern and judge the nations upon earth. Whatever may be their religions, true or false; their gods, the one living and true, or many imaginary, ma-

terial or devilish ; their forms of government, their ethics, their policy and purpose, "He that sitteth in the heavens" is their only law-giver; their sole executive, who proclaims His decrees and enforces their execution; and He is the only judge who can expound His law and justify or condemn. In the church in the wilderness and in Judea, there was a mercy seat, sprinkled with blood by the High Priest. The kingdom of heaven, established on earth, was "Glory to God in the highest and good will toward men," a proclamation of pardon to every creature. And in the new paradise of God, there will be a rainbow round about the throne, on which is seated the Lamb that had been slain. But the throne set over nations is of dominion and of justice. "The Lord reigns." "Thou shalt govern the nations." "Thou shalt judge the people." His sceptre is "a rod of iron." "He is clothed with majesty." "With righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity." For individuals, both righteous and wicked, there will be a judgment at the last day. Throughout all their probation God deals with them in mercy, by His goodness He leads them to repentance, and by affliction He warns them to seek Him early. But for nations, there is no future retribution. He governs and judges them now. He often delays the final and full execution, nevertheless His every act toward nations is according to equity and justice. "Clouds and darkness are round about Him," the emblems of His mysterious and portentous majesty and power. "Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne." Mercy finds no place here. The laws are right and inflexible, and "every transgression and disobedience receives a just recompense of reward." "Righteousness," not autocratic caprice, nor changing policies, but conformity to eternal essential right, derived from the nature and character of God. "The Judge of all the earth will do right." His law or will, however made known to nations, is determined by this principle. All His providential ruling and overruling, restraining and permitting, is according to righteousness. "And judgment," the administration of justice. Might does not make right to individuals nor to nations. These are not at liberty to form their own policies at pleasure, to maintain peace, to inaugurate war, to subjugate others, or to appropriate their territories—restrained only by the power of other nations singly or combined. Every act is either in accordance with or in violation of God's law. He holds each nation to a strict account, and He gives to each according to its deeds. "Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne." It may be said that this is at variance with the usual conception of God. There is a tendency to unduly magnify the love of God, and to ignore or deny His righteousness and justice. Yet

these are divine attributes as plainly revealed and as essential. Indeed, mercy itself cannot be exercised until God finds a way in which He can be just and justify the ungodly. Christ must 'fulfill all righteousness,' and suffer the full condemnation for sin, before His gospel of pardon and peace can be preached. "God is love," of infinite pity, mercy, and grace, but only in Christ, not out of Christ; in the tabernacle and at the cross, not at Sinai nor before the white throne. Nature teaches His eternal power and godhead. Its laws are inflexible and pitiless in their execution. He who breaks them must suffer the consequences. Fire will not cease to burn when millions of moths fly into it. The avalanche does not turn aside because men build their chalets in its proper path. No account is made of character or motive. The plague slays the self-denying nurses and doctors, as well as the thieves who would rob the dead and dying. In God's dominion over nations are displayed His sovereignty and righteous justice. Even in human governments we have only legislative, judicial, and executive departments, which make, define, and administer law. It is true that a pardoning power is given to the executive, but only because State law is defective, and in its application the innocent sometimes suffer and the guilty receive too heavy a penalty. But in divine law there is no defect, and there can be no mistake in its execution. "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." In governors we do not look for nor desire tenderness or pliability, but we must have wisdom, stability of principles, persistency to do rightly and justly without fear or favor. It is because the immutable "Lord reigneth, that the earth rejoices and the multitude of the isles is glad thereof."

This doctrine is verified in all history. The flood, the doom of Sodom, the plagues of Egypt, the wandering in the wilderness, the destruction of the Canaanites, were because the "men had corrupted their way" and "the cup of their iniquity was full." Balaam, as he took up his parable, and Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel, as they uttered woes on the nations, foretold their fates as determined by their rebellions against God, or by their mutual outrages, regarded as sins, transgressions of God's law and will. He will bless the nations which serve Him, but the rebellious will He destroy. History can be interpreted in no other way. If, in modern times, this principle seems not to be applicable, it is only because the end is not yet.

Bearing in mind the conclusion at which we have arrived, let us consider one chapter of our national history. We differ from all other nations in the fact that, while we are, as to origin and permanent characteristics, Anglo Saxons, in our veins flows the blood of all civilized nations. Our vast portals stand wide open, and immi-

gration, unexampled in history, flows into them from all quarters. We welcome all, except the Chinese, to participation in our vast territories, our free institutions, wonderful opportunities, all rights and privileges, in our national life, to complete and perpetual identification. This is not a Siberia to which criminals are transported, nor as formally an asylum to which the religiously oppressed and persecuted may flee. Nor is it a Mecca or a Jerusalem to which multitudes and tribes from time to time go up. It is the home of liberty, where men dwell in unity as one family, whose plenty attracts all men. They come voluntarily in ever increasing numbers, each to claim the rich inheritance offered to all. Here nationalities soon blend and become one people, as streams from distant mountains flow into one sea. There are, however, two notable exceptions. There are two races which had no desire to come into our midst, and cannot depart, who live among us, and are as isolated from each other and from the American people as they were two hundred years ago—the Indian and the Negro.

The Indians, once the untrammelled possessors of all this fair land, have been deceived by baubles, pressed from the coast, step by step, beyond the great river, to the far West, confined within reservations until these are desired by others, held under military control, cheated by Government agents, taught unnatural vices, regarded with contempt, treaties and promises to them broken almost as soon as made, their remonstrances disregarded, when exasperated by intolerable wrongs, their retaliations are visited by new humiliation, robbery, and decimations. No historian has ventured to recount their wrongs. No advocate has attempted to itemize their charges and claims against the nation. No American, through very shame and fear, dare read such documents. Yet every deed of violence has been faithfully recorded and laid before infinite justice. When "the Lord maketh inquisition for blood He remembereth them. He forgetteth not the cry of the humble." "For the Lord God of recompenses shall surely requite."

If we gladly turn from these sad pages of our national crimes, it is only to read another chapter, whose record is still blacker, and whose threatenings are more imminent. I have no intention to detail the crimes and horrors of the slave trade; nor the possible or real wrongs of slavery; nor to inquire who tempted our nation, or whether willingly or unwillingly we received and held Africa's stolen children. We have to do with terrible and undisputed facts. In our colonial history, and during our national existence, until 1808, we encouraged and legalized the African slave trade, and winked at its continuance for many years thereafter. Before 1776 we received over

300,000 Negroes from Africa. When we ceased formally to recognize the trade, we held 1,190,000 slaves. At the breaking out of the late civil war, these had increased, by importation and births, to 4,000,000. And at present there are 8,000,000 Negroes within our borders. It does not concern us to inquire as to England's guilt in this matter. We legalized, encouraged, and profited by this criminal traffic, and have held in involuntary servitude millions of our fellow men. Few, if any, will attempt to justify the means by which they have been procured, nor to deny that the sin lies at our door. But they are here. For 250 years they have been under our laws, civilization, religious ordinances and personal direction and influence, and what has been the result? Their continued isolation is no wrong to them. It is not the result merely of antagonism, prejudice, or difference of condition, but of loyalty to race. For reasons, not clearly understood by us, God has divided men into races, and through all time He has kept these great families distinct. "He hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." They may all worship Him, recognize brotherhood, adopt each other's languages customs, civilization, and occupy together the same territory, but they must remain distinct. Amalgamation of the three great races is not God's will, and has never received any mark of His approbation. Loyalty to race, which holds them apart, is a divinely implanted instinct. Often other means have been used to accomplish the same end. The covenant with Abraham, as understood by his seed, separated them from the Egyptians, the Canaanites, and the Babylonians, during centuries of the closest associations, and preserves them to-day, in all the lands whither they are scattered, a distinct people. Europeans in this land quickly lose their identity, and are merged into our American nation. But the African race must and ought to remain distinct, however they may rise from their present degradation, or demonstrate their ability in every department of life. They have, as a race, a part to perform in the history of the world, a work which God has reserved for them, and which He is beginning to unfold. They must remain a separate people.

What has our supervision of 250 years done for this race? They have received, after a sort, our language. They have learned methods of toil and unquestioning obedience. But physically they are not improved. Intellectually there was no advance until the emancipation, save in a very few individuals, who by some means obtained an education, contrary to our laws; and now there are 73 per cent. of the Negroes who can neither read nor write. These 73 per cent know little more than their forefathers when stolen from dark Africa. It cannot be said that they are incapable. The severity of

the laws found necessary to hold them in ignorance, their present thirst for knowledge, the avidity with which they embrace every opportunity, and the results already attained through very meagre means, all testify to the contrary. Socially and morally the natives of the "dark continent" will compare favorably with them, as to mode of living, respect to rights of property, truthfulness, the inviolability of family ties, and as to purity. The vices and crimes usually associated with the Negroes are not peculiar to that race. If they characterize them in this land, it is chiefly because of the peculiar institution, and methods under which they have been here trained. They retained much of their African superstitions, and have received very little of our holy religion. There are notable exceptions, but as a race these millions are to-day devoid of real Christianity. What has our nation done for them? I speak not of charity, though their condition is pitiable and their needs are great. Their past sufferings and present degradation do appeal powerfully to every heart. Nor do I speak of recompense, though their wrongs be many, aggravated and long continued. It may be well to remember that we are in their debt, that our present policy is not calculated to repay past sufferings and labor, and that there are some injuries for which there can be no compensation. But this is not a case for personal pity, nor for the adjustment of accounts between parties. Contrary to God's law, we constituted ourselves proprietors of this race, and assumed the responsibility of their discipline. And God holds us to an account for our self-appointed task. What have we done for them? Very little of good, and much of evil.

It may be said, we have emancipated them. But the ceasing to do evil, does not undo the evil already done. The freeing of slaves does not justify the capture, transportation, enforced labor, and trials of their forefathers through several generations. Emancipation was a national act, but it was not from love for the slaves, nor desire to do them justice. It was a military necessity and a war measure of the North, and regarded as an outrage and theft by the South. All persons in this land and in others trembled at what might be, and probably would be, the terrible results. It was made without any preparation of the slaves, and when it seemed to be a proclamation of new privations, sufferings and starvation, to a race already burdened with wrongs and an incentive to new crimes. In a moment 4,000,000 slaves, who had been trained to absolute dependence, and provided for, as if helpless children, with each necessity of life, were thrown upon their own resources, without lands, shelter, food, money, or even clothes. No other race has been called to meet such a crisis. That crimes innumerable and fearful were

not committed, that famine and pestilence did not consume them, is to the credit of the despised Negro, who so calmly and successfully stood the terrible test. Egypt let Israel go free from dire necessity, under the lash of the ten plagues. And we, with as little credit, under the scourge of war, emancipated the Negroes.

We have enfranchised them, made them full American citizens, and even eligible to office. We need not inquire how far this is merely a legal fiction; if they be really treated as our fellow citizens; and if they be permitted to exercise the rights thus granted. It is notorious that the ballot was placed in their hands, not for their interests, but to accomplish certain political ends. Nationally it was a dangerous, a suicidal act, and to this race a grievous injury. For rights involve responsibilities—to give sovereignty to those who know nothing of government—to place the ballot in the hands of those who are absolutely ignorant of the interest of our country, the principles of parties, the character of candidates, who cannot even read the names of those for whom they vote—to call them to legislate, execute and judge—is not only a folly, almost inconceivable in an enlightened nation, but also the criminal imposing of duties, the attempt to perform which, or the neglect of which, would be a sin against the nation and against God.

We are educating them. The duties of citizenship involve the claim for education. Adoption gives a child the right to demand the schooling necessary to qualify him for his new station. These cannot be divorced. Education is a prime necessity and an indisputable right. Since the emancipation \$20,000,000 have been contributed for the education of the freedmen, but what is that among so many, and in 25 years? It has brought only a few broken rays into their Egyptian darkness. And this sum has been given by individuals, by benevolent associations and by the church of God. The nation has done nothing for this race as such. It may be said that the several States should attend to the education of their own people. But emancipation, was a national act, whether right or wrong, and it impoverished the Southern States, who cannot be required, in addition to this loss, to educate the Negroes as citizens, to enjoy privileges pledged by the nation, and which these States do not believe should be granted. Pleas and petitions have been offered in their behalf. In their extreme poverty they did not ask for lands nor food, but they have pressed their prayers and demands for education. And for 25 years our nation has made no more response than the dumb idols of Africa.

Their case seems well nigh desperate. The Israelites in Egypt were required to furnish the full tale of bricks, while the necessary

straw was withheld. And these freedmen are burdened with new responsibilities, to develop their acquired manhood, to rise above the imposed degradation of centuries, to establish homes, schools and churches, to become worthy citizens, and to perform the special work given to their race; while almost everything necessary to this Herculean task is denied them. Their environment also is antagonistic, as may be better understood than described. Ishmael and Isaac, though circumcised as fellow heirs of the same covenant, could not dwell as equals in the same house. Sarah was cruel in her method, and Hagar was tearful, but Ishmael could attain unto the blessing promised only by being sent forth. And the seed of the bond woman here is coming to the conclusion that it cannot work out its destiny, and obtain its inheritance in the midst of the seed of the free woman. Notwithstanding all legal fictions, national promises and moral obligations, these two cannot live together as equals. There is no such case in all history. An unrighteous antagonism between the races, an ignoble history, an unjust prejudice, as well as a growing self-respect, an awakening ambition, and a loyalty to race, are causing the blacks to turn from a government indifferent, alike to the claims of divine justice, and to their pleas for security in the exercise of their rights and for training for their citizenship. They are bethinking themselves of the land of their fathers, of the continent given by God to their race, and where their destiny is to be accomplished. This conviction is not at present very general. Nor could it be expected. Patient endurance of wrong has been highly developed by slavery. They have not yet given up faith and hope in the Government. Personally, they have no fatherland, save this in which they are strangers. As a race they can recall no pleasant memories of Africa, or of the middle passage over that track, which, when the sea gives up her dead, will be in greater commotion than any other portion of the secret keeping deep. They have scarcely heard of the Colonization Society, or of Liberia, the Christian Republic of Negroes, whose standing among the Nations is acknowledged, whose fascinating history, fertile lands, free institutions, equal opportunities and unclouded future invite them, where all questions of personal development and race loyalty and work are finding easy and satisfactory solutions. But this knowledge is dawning upon them, and will produce its effects. Already a new demand is heard. For several years they have, unprompted by this Society, sent to our Government petitions, yearly increasing in number and more numerous signed by colored men, praying to be sent to the land of their fathers. Let me interpret them.—We Negroes are in distress. We are burdened with responsibilities which are unendurable in our

present condition. Our American citizenship is, by your indifference and inaction, a sham. Our personal and race obligations cannot be attempted. Our past and present wrongs are crying to God for justice. The storms of vengeance are gathering. Our presence is endangering the peace and integrity of your nation. Our natural increase, at the rate of 500 per day, 182,500 a year, doubling our numbers in 20 years, is threatening to push you overboard and swamp your Ship of State. Our surplus of population is more alarming than the increasing surplus in your treasury. Already we more than outnumber you in several States. Even now there is a black belt in your midst which we are filling, and from which, because of us, you are rapidly and necessarily departing. With you we cannot form one people, neither can our races dwell together on an equality. You do not want us here. You will do nothing for our relief in this land. Send us back to Africa to do our divinely appointed work. We do not ask for a general and enforced exodus of our race, but that you send those who are now willing to go, and whose education and religious character will not endanger but strengthen the Republic of the lone star, which you have founded. Start the emigration by government aid. And before long our people will leave you to the undisturbed possession of this land, and find their own way across the ocean to work out the redemption of dark Africa.—Many such petitions were presented last year. They were referred to appropriate committees which reported adversely, and nothing further was done. Oh, my country, in this thou art not like Cyrus, King of Persia! Thou art more rebellious than Pharaoh of Egypt!

Thus far we have been considering the sovereignty of God, as He makes known His law to nations in the essential principles of right and wrong. We must, for a few moments, notice His sovereignty as revealed in the unfolding of His purposes. The separate acts of divine providence frequently are utterly inscrutable, and "His ways past finding out." Considered together, they may often sorely try the faith of an Abraham or a David. At times it is wise to refrain from all action "less haply we be found even to fight against God." But as we look through the ages there is no obscurity. There is a manifest unity, which is sometimes called the science of history. There is an order in all events, a definite plan gradually unfolded. Nations appear upon the stage, perform their parts and pass off. Some are very transitory. Others, like Israel, are more permanent. None can doubt God's design in all Jewish history. We know for what purpose Pharaoh and the Egyptians were raised up. Syria, Babylon, Macedonia and Rome, had each its own service to perform. So in more modern times. During the dark ages this continent, for

manifest reasons, was hidden from the world. When the time drew near, and Catholic nations sought new possessions, they were one after another turned aside to the Islands, to Mexico and South America. This land was reserved for Protestant Anglo-Saxons, well taught in the truth and disciplined by severe persecutions; in order that civil and religious liberty might here flourish, far removed from the continued strifes of other nations and from the claims of anti-christ and of the false prophet; that we might demonstrate the theory of free institutions, and national greatness and prosperity, and become the missionary of the Gospel to all lands.

God's designs concerning Africa have long been a hidden mystery. Situated in the centre of the Eastern hemisphere, within easy reach of the highest civilizations of the world, its immense proportions have been long known, and the details of its outlines have been often explored. But it has, through all centuries, remained a dark impenetrable continent. Its territory, resources and inhabitants were utterly unknown. To all nations and persons God has said, ye shall not enter here for any purpose. At its portals, disease and death have kept as strict guard, as the angel with the flaming sword at the closed gate of Eden. Science, commerce and religion have sailed round its borders, have touched here and there on its coasts, but have been unable to overleap the barriers. It has remained the only inaccessible land on the face of the earth, except the probably bleak and useless North Pole. Yet like the Congo, whose waters force their way for 300 miles into the ocean, there has been a mighty and perpetual stream of Africa's enslaved children poured into the sea of nations. Whatever may have been man's guilt in this matter, it has been permitted, and therefore forms an important part of God's plan concerning Africa. God meant it for good, when Joseph's brethren sold him. The captivity in Egypt was to train a nation, and in Babylon to wean it from heathenism. And for some purpose, God has directed this stream to our coast, and has placed these Negroes under our tutelage. For 225 years, with no interruption, the school term had continued. When suddenly, without any effort on the part of the pupils, and against the wishes and efforts of their masters, there was a change. To the training in the house and in the field were added new courses. They were admitted to every avocation of civilized life, to learn all mechanical, commercial and clerical labor. They were pressed into schools, primary, graded, academic, scientific, collegiate and professional. Religious teachers flocked to instruct them in Christianity. They were made citizens, and were called to take part in making and administering laws. Already twenty-five years have been allotted to this higher education. And where

fore? Can there be a doubt? If so, it vanishes as we look at Africa. A sudden change has also there taken place. That continent so long closed has been thrown open to the gaze of the world. Livingstone and Stanley, those pioneers of religion and science, have astonished all with their glowing reports of its wonderful character and resources. Men of learning are eager for research, commerce is fluttering to hear off the rich produce. European nations have combined to form and maintain a free Congo State in the vast interior, and to secure prosperity by series of forts and by the navigation of its mighty streams. And the church has arisen with new zeal to evangelize the millions of these newly-discovered tribes. Still, over every portal may be read the divine decree "Africa is for Africans." "No admittance for permanent residence, save to the Negro race." "The civilization and evangelization of this continent must be by her own children." Where are the workmen for this arduous and glorious undertaking? In the fields, shops, schools, seminaries and civil offices of America, 8,000,000 of them. They have been, unconsciously, under training for 250 years for this very service. Where are the means for their transportation? There is an immense balance due them for past services, wrongs and sufferings. The nation is perplexed with the increasing surplus in its coffers. Where shall they begin the work? In Liberia, a Christian Negro Republic, already established in Africa, where the blacks have demonstrated their ability to govern themselves, to establish and maintain educational, religious and governmental institutions, to gain the recognition of civilized nations, the respect and confidence of heathen tribes, and to begin the redemption of Africa. No student of history can doubt that this is the natural and necessary course of events, the unfolding of God's plan. This is God's will and commandment to our nation, as plainly made known as was the law uttered from Sinai. His purpose cannot be changed. The designed course of His government of nations cannot be turned aside. He speaks in words which cannot be misunderstood. "Let my people go forth, to serve in their own land, in the work which I appointed them." To hesitate is rebellion. "Thou shalt judge the people righteously and govern the nations upon earth." "This is the Lord's doing and marvelous in our eyes."